

Message Text

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ORIGIN ACDA-19

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SCI-06 SS-20 USIA-15 SAJ-01 /210 R

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

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E.O.11652: N/A

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TAGS: PARM,UR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS GUIDANCE ON TEST BAN ISSUE

1. FOLLOWING GUIDANCE IS FOR YOUR USE IN CONNECTION WITH
DAVID BINDER STORY IN MAY 3 NY TIMES:

QUESTION: CAN YOU CONFIRM THE REPORT THAT THE U.S. AND THE
SOVIET UNION HAVE BEGUN NEGOTIATING A THRESHOLD TEST BAN
TREATY?

ANSWER: THE SUBJECT OF LIMITING UNDERGROUND TESTING HAS
BEEN UNDER DISCUSSION FOR SOME TIME WITH THE SOVIET UNION.
BUT IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE TO SPECULATE ON WHETHER THIS
SUBJECT WILL ARISE DURING THE SUMMIT.

QUESTION: WHERE HAS IT BEEN DISCUSSED FOR SOME TIME?

ANSWER: AT THE CCD (CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON
DISARMAMENT--THE 26-NATION CONFERENCE AT GENEVA).

QUESTION: WASN'T IT DISCUSSED BETWEEN THE SECRETARY AND
MR. GROMYKO AT GENEVA?

ANSWER: I WOULD RATHER NOT COMMENT ON THEIR PRIVATE
DISCUSSIONS.

QUESTION: IS THE U.S. IN FAVOR OF A THRESHOLD BAN?

ANSWER: WE'RE STUDYING ALL THE POSSIBILITIES FOR TESTING
LIMITATIONS, BUT FOR THE PRESENT I CANNOT COMMENT ON
WHAT OUR POSITION MIGHT BE.

QUESTION: DOWN TO WHAT EXPLOSIVE YIELD CAN WE IDENTIFY
UNDERGROUND NUCLEAR TESTS?

ANSWER: THERE IS NO ABSOLUTE ANSWER. IT DEPENDS ON
SUCH FACTORS AS THE VERIFICATION SYSTEM AND THE MEDIUM
IN WHICH THE TEST TAKES PLACE.

QUESTION: THEN HOW WOULD YOU DETERMINE WHAT MAGNITUDE
WOULD BE ALLOWABLE IN A TREATY?
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ANSWER: THAT WOULD DEPEND ON VERIFIABILITY AND PERHAPS
OTHER FACTORS, SUBJECT TO NEGOTIATION.

QUESTION: WOULD PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS--FOR
EXCAVATION AND UNDERGROUND ENGINEERING--BE PERMISSIBLE
UNDER A THRESHOLD TEST BAN?

ANSWER: PRESUMABLY, BELOW THE THRESHOLD--BUT I WOULD NOT WANT TO SPECULATE ON WHAT THE CONTENT OF SUCH AN AGREEMENT MIGHT BE.

QUESTION: DO YOU THINK SUCH AN AGREEMENT MIGHT BE RIPE FOR SIGNATURE AT THE TIME OF THE PRESIDENT'S PROJECTED TRIP TO MOSCOW?

ANSWER: AS I SAID, IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE TO SPECULATE ON WHETHER THIS SUBJECT WILL ARISE DURING THE SUMMIT. RUSH

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